

Leptinella albida

SYNONYMS

Cotula sericea (Kirk) Cockayne et Allan, *Cotula albida* D.G.Lloyd,

FAMILY

Asteraceae

AUTHORITY

Leptinella albida (D.G.Lloyd) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb

FLORA CATEGORY

Vascular – Native

ENDEMIC TAXON

Yes

ENDEMIC GENUS

No

ENDEMIC FAMILY

No

STRUCTURAL CLASS

Herbs - Dicotyledonous composites

NVS CODE

LEPALB

CHROMOSOME NUMBER

2n = 52

CURRENT CONSERVATION STATUS

2017 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: DP, RR, Sp

PREVIOUS CONSERVATION STATUSES

2012 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon | Qualifiers: RR, Sp

2009 | At Risk – Naturally Uncommon

2004 | Range Restricted

DISTRIBUTION

Endemic. South Island, Central Otago Mountains (Old Man Range, Mt Cardrona and Mount Pisa (Pisa Range))

HABITAT

Alpine (>1600 m a.s.l.) in fell field, rubble, and rockland.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Monoecious, creeping, perennial herb forming compact mats up to 1 m wide, all parts densely covered in long silky, white-silver or grey-silvery hairs. Rhizomes densely intertwined, more or less horizontal on soil surface or ascending and tightly packed, very hairy; branches usually in clusters of up to 4 radiating from around a flowering node; leaves clustered near stem apex, usually crowded, rarely up to 8 mm apart, short shoots absent. Roots stout up to 0.5 mm diameter. Leaves 1-pinnatifid, 4-10 x 2-3 mm; blade coriaceous, dark green though obscured by dense covering of woolly hairs; pinnae 4-8 pairs, close set and obscured by hairs, cut to rachis, obovate, obtuse, edentate. Peduncles longer than leaves; 10-20 mm, ebracteate, densely floccose, woolly. Capitula 3-10 mm diameter; surface convex; involucre subcampanulate; involucral bracts 20, subequally biseriate, oblong, grey-green, densely floccose, woolly hairy, with wide brown scarious margins; pistillate florets 20, subequally biseriate, 2.75 mm long, straight, pale yellow or yellow-red; corolla 3 times as long as wide, teeth equal; staminate florets numerous. Cypsela 1.6-0.6 mm, golden-brown, compressed, biconvex, slightly wrinkled.



Mt Cardrona. Photographer: John Smith-Dodsworth, Licence: CC BY-NC.



Leptinella albida. Photographer: John Barkla, Licence: CC BY.

SIMILAR TAXA

Closely allied to *L. pectinata* (Hook.f.) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb, especially subsp. *villosa* (G.Simpson) D.G.Lloyd et C.J.Webb. From this subspecies *L. albida* cannot always be reliably distinguished; morphologically it typically differs by its tight, mat-forming habit and silvery foliage, with all parts except the florets densely covered in floccose, woolly, silvery-white hairs. Nevertheless, intermediates occur. Cytologically *L. albida* is diploid ($2n = 52$) and subsp. *villosa* tetraploid ($2n = 104$) but even there distinctions fall apart because in some sites plants with the morphology of *L. albida* have $2n = 104$ whilst at others plants matching *L. pectinata* subsp. *villosa* have been found with chromosome numbers of $2n = 52$.

FLOWERING

October - January

FLOWER COLOURS

Red/Pink, Yellow

FRUITING

December - April

LIFE CYCLE

Papery cypselae are dispersed by wind and possibly attachment (Thorsen et al., 2009).

PROPAGATION TECHNIQUE

Easily grown from rooted pieces. However, prefers non-humid climates and dislikes excessive moisture.

THREATS

A local, range restricted endemic abundant within its few known habitats.

ETYMOLOGY

leptinella: From the Greek word leptos (meaning slender, thin or delicate), referring to the ovary

albida: From the Latin 'alba', meaning somewhat white

TAXANOMIC NOTES

The distinction of this species from *L. pectinata* subsp. *villosa* is not clear, intergrades are common, and cytological results conflicting. Further research is needed to ascertain its exact taxonomic status.

ATTRIBUTION

Fact sheet prepared for NZPCN by P.J. de Lange (31 August 2006). Description from Lloyd (1972) - as *Cotula albida*.

REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

Lloyd, D.G. 1972: A revision of the New Zealand, Subantarctic, and South American species of *Cotula*, section *Leptinella*. *New Zealand Journal of Botany* 10: 277-372.

Thorsen, M. J.; Dickinson, K. J. M.; Seddon, P. J. 2009. Seed dispersal systems in the New Zealand flora. *Perspectives in Plant Ecology, Evolution and Systematics* 11: 285-309.

NZPCN FACT SHEET CITATION

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MORE INFORMATION

<https://www.nzpcn.org.nz/flora/species/leptinella-albida/>